REMARKS

Claims 1-40 are pending.

The specification has been amended to incorporate by reference the International application from which the present application is based.

In view of the foregoing, early action on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger W. Parkhurst

Reg. No. 25,177

STEPTOE & JOHNSON LLP 1330 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036

Tel: (202) 429-3000